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16th March, 2015

Release Myanmar Students

Inter University Students' Federation (IUSF) of Sri Lanka condemns the undemocratic arrests of peaceful protesters in Myanmar including students, journalists and monks. We have been informed by Myanmar students that 127 people including two journalists were arrested by the Myanmar police on March 10th in the clashes between the police and protesting students and that although a few students and journalists have been released since then, a large number of students and other activists are still held in prison. We are also informed that these students are being subject to torture while being held in prison.

IUSF stands in solidarity with students of Myanmar who are struggling against arbitrary reforms to the education law by way of the National Education Act and demands that the government releases all students, monks, journalists and villagers who were arrested and tortured. The IUSF also emphasize the important of an inquiry into the incidents of any torture the students were subject to in prison.

IUSF has been continuously struggling against neoliberal education reforms in Sri Lanka for the past three decades and therefore, is well aware of the state repression that comes along with these detrimental education reforms. In the past few years Sri Lankan government adopted a determined policy of privatization of education and repression of students along with it.

We see the struggle for free education as a global struggle, which is facing repression in a global level, in all countries where the struggle is carried on. From the students of Birmingham who were suspended and arrested last year to the students of Myanmar who are held in prison and being tortured, the struggle for free education and the brutal repression it faces has been the common experience of all students and other social forces in the world.

Myanmar Government, although it is said to have transformed into a parliament democracy from the military junta, is not allowing peaceful protest against its arbitrary policy making and therefore IUSF condemns it as a repressive state that seeks to fetter democracy in Myanmar.

IUSF stands in solidarity with students and all other social forces struggling against repressive and arbitrary laws in Myanmar and demands that the government scraps down the New National Education Law, which lacks transparency, endangers academic freedom and risks improper budget allocations for education. IUSF stands in solidarity with Myanmar students' struggle for free education.

Myanmar students will never walk alone. Every student, worker, farmer, journalist, monk and every other social force who are walking for freedom and democracy are walking with them. Students are united against oppression in the struggle for free education for everyone.

Najith Indika,

Convener – Inter University Students' Federation